

A LETTER from a Country Clergy- man to his Brother in the Neighbourhood, touching some Reproaches cast upon the BISHOPS.

Dear Brother,

THE Unhappy Flames which have of late been blown up among us, by interesting our selves in the Disputes between the Bishops and the lower House of Convocation, and the unkind Reflections which are but too often cast upon the greater part of those Venerable Prelates by many even of our Order; I conceive to be so great an Offence to Almighty God, so dangerous to the Welfare of our Church, and to be such a Reproach to our Holy Religion, that I cannot think it a great degree of forwardness in my self or in any other, to endeavour whatever may lie in our power to compose those sad Differences and Animosities, the Consequences whereof look so very fatal towards us. This is the occasion of troubling you with this Letter: in which I shall take the Liberty to excuse my self from making Animadversions upon any Miscarriages of our Superiours, which some of them by Inadvertency and the common frailty of Humane Nature may have fallen into; That being a Part which I cannot think my self by Duty called to, nor to be becoming a Person who moves in so mean a Sphere as I: and besides I fancy I shall find matter enough to fill up this Letter in pointing at the Faults which we are guilty of on our side; and shewing that we have taken up very mistaken Characters of very good and excellent Men, by taxing them for Actions with which they are no ways chargeable, or for which they are no ways blameable.

I. And indeed it is very dismal to consider what vile Reproaches are cast upon the greatest part of those Reverend Persons by too many of our own Coat: To hear us so frequently taxing them as affecting a Tyrannical Despotick Power over the Clergy; as being Betrayers of the common Liberties of the Church; Mercenary Instruments and Parasites of the Court; Fanaticks in their Hearts, and avowed Enemies of every part of our Ecclesiastical Constitution, unless it be the fair Revenues which they have the happiness to enjoy under it. For Clergymen to utter these things in their Discourse both publick and private, and to publish the like, by Writings, to the whole World; can be no ways suitable to the Rules of the Holy Religion we profess nor to the Character we sustain in God's Church; and I think I may add, does bid the utmost defiance to the Principles of the Church of England, which bespeak the highest Esteem and Veneration for the Order of Bishops. This is a practice which there is none of us sometime past but would have condemned with the greatest abhorrence and detestation. Let us for once suppose somebody to have Prophesied fourteen or fifteen Years ago, that many of us who then valued our selves so much upon our Duty and Obedience to our Bishops, and past such severe Reflections upon the undutiful carriage of others, that we should within a few years treat them with so an unhandsome a deportment, and give them all those good complements which have been so freely of late bestowed upon them; would not every one of us have been ready to return with indignation that of Hazaël, *Is thy servant*

a Digg that he should do this thing? This my good Brother does deserve a deep and serious reflexion: for these Gospel Duties you know are of Eternal Verity, and will be as true a thousand years hence as they were twenty years ago; nor can I imagine that any one of us does think that a part of our Religion can grow in or out of fashion as peoples Cloathes do. If there are no duties owing to our Diocesans we ought to recant the error we were in by betraying the Dignity of our own Order whilst we were in time past so liberally paying them; or if there be any Regards owing, the Methods which have been of late taken have been but a pretty odd way of discharging them. And since we are entered upon this point I will begg the freedom to recommend to your Consideration something farther upon it: And let us consider.

II. That the very *Raillery* we some of us are wont to exert upon this occasion, if it was not levelled at our Superiors and the ground of it was never so well bottom'd, is a part not altogether becoming our Function. We that are the Ministers of Jesus Christ are obliged more nicely to follow our great Masters Coppy and Example, who *when he was reviled, reviled not again*. A Christian Pastor can never look with so ill a grace, as when he assumes the Character of a Droll or a Satyr. Sarcasm and Buffoonery art at best but a sorry part of Wit, and I am confident no part at all of Religion. We frequently are commanded in Scripture to afford to those who are committed to our charge a shining Example of Peaceableness and Charity, but I cannot observe that God has any where commissioned Us a power to instruct them in the Arts of Taunts and Invectives. This vile Trade we know well enough was taken up by the accursed Enemies of Christianity; the *Lucians*, and *Julians* and *Celsus's* had singular Talents this way, and did a great deal of mischief to the Gospel by them; but I am at a loss to find when it received any benefit from ill-natured Wits. The Gospel thrived well by the meekness and patience of its first Professors, and by such holy steps made its way over all the Pagan World; whilst Heathenism, which was supported by the Drollery and Satyr of its Philosophers, did daily

loose ground, till it fell at last into nothing. This is argument sufficient to persuade us that we pursue but very ill advised Methods whilst we are carrying on a cause that we are willing to have succeed, by means which are such a reproach to our Profession, which shew so ill an Example to our People, and which we have not the least hopes to expect, that God Almighty will crown with any manner of blessing. Now if we would seriously apply this, we should have an end of such smart Books and fine Jest's upon our Bishops; especially if we considered that these Jest's are not only very unmannerly as being advanced against our Betters, but do likewise share a great degree of Irreligion and Profaneness: for those holy Persons, who by their Office do bear so nigh a Relation to our blessed Lord, cannot be so unhandsonly sported with, without reflecting a Reproach also upon Christ and his Religion.

III. And as I look upon it a great fault to make use of such unhandson Drollery upon our Diocesans, so I take it to be a very imprudent and unchristian way for us to trumpet about their faults, altho' they were guilty of them in those particulars and in that degree, as some of us pretend. It is a kind of a natural Law which the vilest of Men are scarce hardy enough to transgress; *Not to vilify those of our own Body* and which bear any nigh relation to us. Those unkind Offices are left for strangers only to execute; every wise person esteeming it a Madness, to discover those Defects which must in the event reflect upon himself. For the Contempt which one part of the Body suffers, is by an easy deduction transferrable to the other. We of the Clergy are apt to be loaded enough of all Conscience by other people without doors, and the Bishops of the Church do find sufficient opposition from Papists, and Sectaries; therefore I presume we Clergymen are not at that time in the most warrantable employment, when we our selves are proclaiming to the World, what ill actions we impute to our Bishops. If as a late ingenious Author says, that *Those Men who read Lessons to Princes how to strain Ecclesiastical power to the utmost without exceeding it, be Church Emphysons and Dudlys*, I think, I may as well conclude

conclude (if I delighted in hard words,) That those who accuse the Bishops of their own Church for such ill Men as some of our Order do; are Church Chams and Judas's for discovering their Fathers nakedness and betraying their spiritual Governours.

IV. In the next place it behoves us a little to consider, before we make too bold with our Bishops Characters; how must we gratify our common Enemies of all sorts, and expose our Mother-Church by such a Representation of the Governours thereof, to the scorn and obloquy of those who greedily watch for such opportunities to revile us. Don't you think, that this must needs give a powerful encouragement to the several Sectaries among us to come into the Church, the Governours whereof they see set off in those delicate colours, which some of us of late have so liberally adorned them with? What a curious History of English Bishops must we expect from the next Popish Pamphlets that come over from *Doway* and *St. Omers*; and what domestick Authorities will be vouched to make their slanders good? It is easy enough to imagine and common enough to observe, what fine sport the Quarrels with our Bishops make among our Atheists and Deists. Sometimes they take a handle from these Differences to expose the Bishops for affecting an "incompetent Power and for minding no part of their Office so much as to Lord it over their Fellow-Shepherds; deny this, and they call upon the Authorities of many of the Clergy to assert it; and then it goes for undeniable. At other times they are pleased to be quit with these Authorities themselves, and call 'em all a parcel of Hypocritical Sparks, that make a world of stir with Duty and Obedience till it begins to pinch them, and then they fly in the Face of the King and Bishops without fear, or discretion. One would think that we are under a perfect Infatuation to make ourselves and the Religion and Church we are Ministers of, a Jest and Mockery to these prophane Wretches. But the highest Degree of madness is for some of us to court the Favour of these very Men to support us against our Bishops, and lay open their Character so unhandsonely before such Men. Certainly,

the Affairs of the Church are safer in the hands of the most Tyrannical Bishops, than of them who are Enemies to all Religion: neither are the Presbyters like to find any extraordinary Redress from them, who look upon the whole Function to be Impostors alike.

'Tis no excuse to say, that this freedom taken with the Bishops is but by way of Repisal, to be even with a Writer on the Bishops side who took as great a freedom with the inferior Clergy. I must confess that I for my part, and a great many other indifferent persons, never liked that part of that Writers Book; and I think his Cause had not been the worse if it had been spared. But let him answer for That—Now as these Reproaches did not proceed from the Bishops, so this is the unjustest way of Retaliation to make them suffer for the faults of others: or if the Bishops had any share in promoting them, our Holy Religion has taught us a better Lesson, than to return Evil for Evil. If one part of the Clergy have been falsely traduced, we should be cautious how we involve the remaining part under the same imputation. What sad events will follow upon the keenness of these Disputes God alone knows; but this I am sure of, that between this Writer and his Answerer, the Church of England has suffered more in her Reputation than will easily be retrieved: for the Bishops are represented in such a Dress by the one and the Presbyters by the other; that it wants only the hand of a *Sanders* or a *Parsons* to put them both together; and then out comes such a Picture of the English Reformation, as will make us all curse these unhappy Disputes which have brought such shame upon us.

V. If these Considerations be not of weight enough to make us leave off this prevailing Custom of aspersing our Bishops, I shall add one more, and that is our Oath of Canonical Obedience. Now we all know what Canonical Obedience is, viz. All that Respect and Submission, which the Canons require to be paid to our Diocesans. An injurious Accuser of a Bishop, is by the Canons to have a perpetual Brand of Infamy fixed upon him, and to be Excommunicated: An Obedience is to be paid them in *omnibus licitis & honestis*,

fit, &c. Now I cannot tell how to reconcile an ignominious Treatment and bespattering their Character with the Ecclesiastical Precepts which we Swear to. Our Guilt must needs stare some of us in the Face when we reflect upon this; as having taken no more care to discharge these Obligations which we have so Sacredly engaged to perform. This were a grievous Crime, tho' there were sufficient ground for these Clamours against our Diocesans; especially, to do it in the way that is generally practised; but when there is so little foundation for these heavy Imputations, I conceive it to be such an aggravation of the Fault, as we can never be easy under, when we seriously lay it to Heart. And therefore in the remaining part of this Letter, I shall let my self to Vindicate our present Bench of Bishops from those Aspersions, which either by Unthinking, or Designing Men, have of late so plentifully been thrown upon them.

VI. One fault, which is mightily laid to their charge, is, Their being of Latitudinarian principles as they are called, that is, no hearty friends to our Ecclesiastical Constitution, but are rather inclined to the Dissenters Tenets and endeavour by all means to bring the Church to the Conventicle Level; and that 'tis in order to this end they are so very fond of setting a Comprehension on foot thereby to destroy our Present Church Establishment and Discipline and set up something else which likes them better. But what a ridiculous calumny is this? to think that the Bishops who enjoy so great a share in the Churches revenues should be engaged in a design of pulling it down; this would be such a degree of self denial that their Adversaries in other cases would hardly allow them. But how do they know that these Bishops have such a disliking to the Ecclesiastical settlement? If Mens principles are to be discovered by their words and actions the present Bishops have both on their side to vindicate them from this aspersion. Their frequent subscriptions to the Articles, their usual discourse both in publick and private together with their Sermons, are all of them in contradiction to what is here objected. There are several of them, who have strenuously wrote in defence of our Constitution; witness the

Cases against the Dissenters which were mostly wrote by the Pens of those very Men who are thus calumniated. Tho' by the way, I do not find in my accounts that any great number of those who bear so hard upon the Bishops and put so much upon this Head, did give any hand to this noble work: therefore methinks it is pretty strange, that the present Bishops should commence Phanaticks for writing so bravely against the Schism, and others should be the only Church of *England* Men for being silent under it. As for the matters of alteration which were on foot about a dozen years ago, these present Bishops are not more to be blamed for them, than those other Bishops who declared to the late King *James*, that they would be willing to come to such a Temper, as that all differences in Religion, as far as possible, might be composed among us. This was not thought such an Offence when the Resolution was first made, and therefore why are they so much to be blamed for endeavouring afterwards to make their words good? The unlucky disputes which then happened run up Mens Blood so high, and frightened them with such misapprehensions of some strange designs upon the Church in that affair, that those Bishops; who appeared in behalf of that project, could hardly recover the hearty Affections of their Clergy ever since. And if we consider the lowd clamours which have been raised against some of their Lordships about this Business, one could not think but that they were contriving at that time the very unHINGING of our whole Constitution. And yet I am fully assured, that all that was then designed was no more then the changing a few Apocryphal Lessons for Canonical Scripture. Pointing the new Translation of the Psalms for singing and reading in lieu of the Old: making all the Collects agree more with the Epistles and Gospels as was begun tho' abruptly left off by the Commissioners at the *Savoy* in 1662. and changing an exceptionable passage or two in the other Services. I could wish their Lordships would be so just to themselves as to publish the Resolutions of the Committee in *Jerusalem* Chamber; and then I am persuaded that we should all be of opinion that their Lordships are so far from meriting

meriting the Reproach which is for that Reason thrown upon them, that they would appear to deserve the highest commendation. And, since People have grown cool upon that matter I hardly find any sensible Man; who pretends to find more fault now, than ill timing of that Design. But by the way, is it not a little hard, that we should bear a perpetual Enmity to our Bishops for the ill timing of an Action? Nay, this was no more than what was before designed in the Comprehension Bill in the Lords house, which was liked well enough by some of those persons who appeared so keenly against the Commission, and the treating of that Affair in Convocation afterwards; tho' upon what Reason they changed their Opinion, I pretend not to secret History enough to understand; unless they began to dislike it, because some other Persons besides themselves, came to take a part in the doing it.

VII. Another Misapprehension of their Lordships Actions, and which the generality of People at present seem to be the most incurably possess'd with, is concerning their *Voting in Parliament always*, as it is said, *on the Government side*; wherby, 'tis pretended, they give occasion to suspect, that they are not always led by impartial Considerations; but exert their Zeal in that Interest which is best able to reward them with higher Preferments. This, I know, is a terrible Cry among the Atheists and Jacobites, and some other unthinking People, who have the Wit to be made Tools to their Designs; which are by weakning the King's Interest, and bespattering all Men of high Station in the Church, to compass the glorious Ends, they are pursuing, of Irreligion and Slavery. But this Imputation, False and Scandalous as it is, carries a Complement with it, which the Objectors did not design, when they say, That the Bishops Vote *always* on the Court side. And I will assure you, this very Vertue of Constancy deserves in this Age no small Commendation; for we have seen some others who are not Bishops, to have changed sides two or three times since his Majesty's Accession to the Crown; who never were against the King's Affairs when any thing was to be got by them; and always against them, when nothing was

to be lost by the opposition. But why is it such a Crime to Vote on the King's side? His Affairs are not the more unjust, because He has the happiness to be able to reward the Assisters of them. Nay, I am confident, tho' it was out of the King's Power to shew any further marks of Favour upon any of the present Bishops, who are hereby calumniated, the King would not have much fewer Votes from that Venerable Bench, than He has. There's no Body doubts, but that the Archbishop of *Canterbury* is as hearty in the King's Interest, and gives his Vote as frequently on his side as any of his Comprovincials; and yet I dare say, he has no hopes of a Translation, on this side Heaven. And why should we not expect a like Sincerity from the rest? Methinks, their bare Gratitude to the King for being advanced by him, should sooner engage them to His Majesty's Interest, than to side with some ambitious, and disobligh'd Men, who are known Enemies both to the King, and them too. But there is a higher Motive which I am persuaded the Bishops are sway'd by in giving their Suffrages in Parliament; and that is, To support the present Government, on which all our Liberties, and Religion depend. And let me tell you, Sir, for all the Talk of thoughtless, and intriguing Men, the Bishops have had their share, and have gone a good way in the securing it. In the midst of warm Disputes, they have held such a Temper and Moderation, and acted with such a steady Resolution for the support of the Government, that future Ages will be bound to bless their Memory for it. Therefore upon the whole, it can be no Fault in the Bishops to give their Votes with regard to the King's Interest; unless it can be proved, that the King has any Interest separate from the Church and Nation; which He is so far from appearing ever to have had, that He has all along, under God, been the greatest Preserver of both. But if it should please God, that this, or any other King should ever pursue Methods contrary to the Good of These; I do verily believe no Temporal expectations will engage Men of their Goodness and Sincerity to act any thing in compliance with them, that may be inconsistent with their Honour and Conscience.

VIII. Another Matter there is, which we of the Gown do chiefly Quarrel our Bishops for; and that is, Their hindering the Clergy to act in Convocation for Eight, or Ten Years together; and when at last, after a great deal of Baiting, they were wearied into a Concession for their Sitting, they were pleased to trump up a Right of Adjournment of the Lower House to all Times, and upon all Occasions; whereby the whole end of their meeting is utterly defeated. But I have some reason to be of opinion, that our grounds do not a little fail us, when we suppose, that this long intermission of a *Convocation* did proceed from any Arbitrary Resolution of the Bishops; for 'tis not improbable to think, that this whole Affair was adjusted by wise and mature Deliberation, without any mixture of private pique and resentment, and that all due regard was had to the case and welfare both of Church and State. The Nation had been afflicted by a long and expensive War, which afforded neither Leisure, nor sufficient Maintenance for the Clergy to stay long off from their Cures in a Synodical Attendance. Neither was it so proper to venture then upon any warm Ecclesiastical Disputes which do usually attend such Meetings, at a time when Contests in the State had raised Mens bloods but too high already. Afterwards, since the end of the War, upon the seeming desire of the generality of the Clergy, that a Convocation should meet, they accordingly did, had several Sessions, and were going upon very commendable Business in both Houses. But alas! these noble Designs were blasted by a Dispute which arose about the right of adjournments; which the members of the lower House were prompted to claim, having found something in a dark part of History, and in Registers then not so exactly, scan'd, which seemed to make in some measure for them. How far these few Instances of Adjournment against those multitudes which are produced on the Arch-Bishop's side will maintain a right; I leave those who understand these matters better than my self, to judge. But if the lower House have a right of adjourning themselves; it is a power which their predecessors have thought fit very seldom to claim, it is not pretended more than two or

three times in almost as many Centuries: and why should the Clergy in our times set such a value upon a Right, which our Fore-fathers did hardly think worth the claiming in theirs? 'Tis sufficient to remove a bar against their Right, to have claimed it and put themselves for once in an actual possession of it, and so to leave the nice dispute of it till better times; or if no more be said of it in our times, they are so far from betraying a Right which our fore-fathers have bequeathed as (as 'tis said by some) that the last Convocation did as much in that Affair, as can be pretended any of our Fore-fathers did. In short, there is no doubt but that the Convocation may sit and act if they please for all the Arch-Bishop's power of Adjourning, and the King's Right of Licence, upon humble desire thereof; for neither of them both have ever given any occasion to suspect, that they will be at any time wanting to hearken to any proposals that may be for the good of their Church and People. And when the Necessity of a Convocation in the present conjuncture (as we all of us confess) does press us so hard; it is not worth while to dispute from what Authority the power of their Acting or their Adjournments do proceed. The lamentable growth of Irreligion, the Abuses in Spiritual Courts and the very low Ebb of all Ecclesiastical Authority do call aloud for Synodical meetings, to consider with the utmost Wisdom and Application for speedy Remedies to such growing Evils: these matters require an immediate Redress, whilst those other questions will keep Cold to a more convenient season. Now since the Arch Bishop had been so long in possession of the Right of Adjournment, and his Comprovincials have some reason to believe that the lower House by assuming this Privilege do prepare a way to an equality with their order, and to be a Co-ordinate power with them, they cannot be blamed for asserting their own and their Metropolitans Dignity; and are less I think to be accused for hindring the Advantages of a Synod; because all the advantages which a Synod can pretend to confer, may, upon the Antient accustomed way of application to Superiors be obtained, without the insisting upon these Claims. When the lower House shall desire

to meet upon intermediate days for dispatch of Business, and a Licence by humble petition asked for, to frame Ecclesiastical Laws, and these requests shall not be gratified; 'tis time to begin a Clamour then, when more reason is given to think it deserved, then now there has been. Power I know is a sweet thing, and those who hope to have a share in it are wont to contend eagerly for it; and therefore it is no wonder that for this Reason the Controversy is carried on with some warmth on both sides; but when common danger does on every side threaten, Profaneness and Irreligion at home, and Popery and Slavery from abroad; I hope, we shall follow the example of the gallant old *Romans* who left of their squabbles among themselves, whenever they were attacked by their Enemies; and never resumed their Contests, till they were sure that all was so safe from without, that a little scolding at home cou'd not hurt them.

IX. The last Prejudice which is advanced against our present Bishops, and handed about to the detriment of their Character, is their interesting themselves in Elections to Parliament, and appearing (as is suggested) for Fanatics and Whiggs in opposition to those who are true Sons of the Church and well grounded in their Principles too in relation to the Monarchical Government of our Nation.

But why, I pray, have not the Bishops as good a Plea to exert their Interest in their Country to serve their Friends, as any of the Lay Lords to assist theirs? And if there be any thing in this Objection, it arrains the whole House of Lords as well as the Bench of the Bishops. The Bishops have frequent occasion to make use of the Authority and Friendship of many of their Neighbouring Gentry for the redressing hardships which are too frequently thrown upon some of their Clergy, and for their bestowing preferments upon others whose merits deserve further encouragements; and can any Bishop handsomely refuse to obtain a few Votes from some of his dependants for a Person to whom he stands obliged for services both to the Church and himself? Why, should the Bishops of all the Men in the Nation be abridged of the Priviledges of serving their Friends upon such

a Publick occasion? Shall every petty Freeholder, and some who have no property at all, be allow'd to canvass about for any one they have a fancy for; and must the Bishops who have so large Estates, and so much greater Prudence to judge of the fitness of a Choice, be tied up from assisting a Person of merit in his Competition? But the Persons they appear for are Whiggs and Fanatics. And this is all vile Calumny. I do not think, there can be an Instance given in the whole Nation of a Bishops appearing for any Gentleman, but who is an habitual Member of the *Church of England*. They have never opposed any Gentleman's Interest, but who has been of known, or at least suspected disaffection to the Government; and to endeavour to keep out such in this juncture of Affairs can need no Apology. Every hearty Lover of the King and our present Constitution is a Whigg and Fanatick to the Jacobites, and this is all the title they have to those ill Names which their Enemies so unkindly bestow upon them. Now tho' the Common People are frequently imposed upon by such slanderous Characters, the Bishops have sagacity enough to penetrate through the Artifices of Malice, and cannot think it just, that the Nation should be deprived of the Assistance of a Member of Worth and Fidelity, for the sake of a few bespattering Reflections without any ground.

X. And now having I think sufficiently vindicated our present Bishops against these imputations by which some have endeavoured to sully their Character; I beg leave to say something farther to engage our hearty Love and Esteem for them; and to let you understand, that we have Reason to bless God, for raising up among us such excellent Fathers in the Church, that do so eminently adorn the high Station they are in, by all the good Qualifications which are desirable for that Calling. For, as for their Life and Conversation, those that are most calumniated amongst them, have nothing that can be objected to them upon this account; they having all along led Lives of the greatest circumspection and exactness, and shewn forth shining examples of *Sobriety, Meekness and Charity*. Neither is their *Learning* inferior to that

that of the Bishops of the last Age, and the Books which they have wrote, have a vein of Reasoning and a Calmness running thro' them, as is superior to that of their Predecessors. That *Humility* which adorns the Life of every Christian renders theirs illustrious; for I will defie the memory of the present Age or the Annals of former, to shew such a Set of Men so famous for their Personal Qualifications and raised to such an eminency of Station, that have shewed such an obliging Familiarity to those below them, as these Bishops have done. This next to the Grace of God, is owing, I believe, to the long and painful discharge of their Labours in their Parishes before their promotion; being thereby freed from that high kind of deportment which some of their Predecessors have been charged with; who having lived mostly in the grandure of a Cathedraical Dignity were trained up to a Superiority over their Rural Brethren, which they did not to be sure forget as their honour increased upon them. Nay, I will venture to say, That when it shall please God to take to himself these good Men whom some of us do, so disesteem, that it will not be easy to find a great many among us, who will fill those places as well as they have done. Then what a pity is it, that they who are possessed of so much personal worth, and so much obliging Condescension, should find so unkind Returns from many of their own Clergy? This can proceed only from a fore-conceived prejudice and misapprehension of their true Character, which arises not from any just ground, but, from being engaged in a party and for that reason, unadvisedly believing all that is said in their Disparagement. If this unhand-some and ungodly Custom do not stop in good time, God knows whither it will at last carry us. The antient Heresies and Schisms, which so sadly pesterd the Primitive Church, had their original from Presbyters quarelling with their Bishops. This gave a rise to the Heresies of *Arius* and *Novatianus*, and to the schism of the *Donatists*. But I hope, the Good God will afford us more Grace and Wisdom than to let matters run so far. I do not think this Humour to be spread so very wide as to affect any great part of our Clergy; the far greater number I am persuaded do stick fast to their ancient Principles and Duty and have never ceased to pay that

Love and Respect to their Diocesans which our Fore-Fathers were so hearty in; and that ill example, which some disoblighd Persons have set, will (I hope) be so far from being copied, that they themselves will see their Error and be sorry for it.

But I would not have you mistake me, as if I charged these Faults upon the Lower House of Convocation, in their Disputes with the Bishops; for tho' I confess, I cannot go into Opinion with them in all they have advanced; yet they, as acting in a Synodical Authority, have a Privilege to Remonstrate upon any Grievances they think to be hard upon them, without breach of their Duty to Superiours; Or, if Rules of Decency be sometimes transgressed, the warmth of the Disputes, they may be engaged in, goes a good way in alleviation. But my Business is to silence, if I could, the reflecting Talk of those, who reproach the Bishops without Doors; which tho' they were of the House, they have no Synodical Privilege to excuse them for. For every Presbyter then is upon the Level with You and me, and owe as much Duty and Regard to their respective Bishops. But I am afraid, there are the greatest number of Tongues running upon this Theme, that have had no share in these Disputes; but what they have been pleased to take to themselves, without being called to it. And I think it is time for all who have nothing to do in these Matters, to be quiet, when the Chief Managers of the Lower House Controversy, and all the Worthy Members of the Body now met, seem inclined to Peace, and the ancient good Correspondence. Now These I think, we may both of us, as occasion shall offer, put in mind of their Duty, without assuming an Authority which does not belong to us. For Brotherly Admonition, is a common Duty of Christianity; and therefore to be sure does not lie out of our way, that have the honour to take a share in the Ministerial Function. For if you take seasonable opportunities to speak calmly upon these Heads, or other, which your self may suggest, where you shall find need: I doubt not, but in time, and with God's Blessing, your Discourse will have its desired effect in the Neighbourhood; and if others would take upon them to do the like elsewhere in the Nation, I am persuaded we should all grow into a good Humour once again. and love our Bishops as we have done formerly. Thus recommending you to the Divine Protection, and praying for good Success in the Attempt you shall make in the kind I advise, or any other Good-work of your Calling.

I am your faithful Friend,
and Brother in Christ, &c. 2.

